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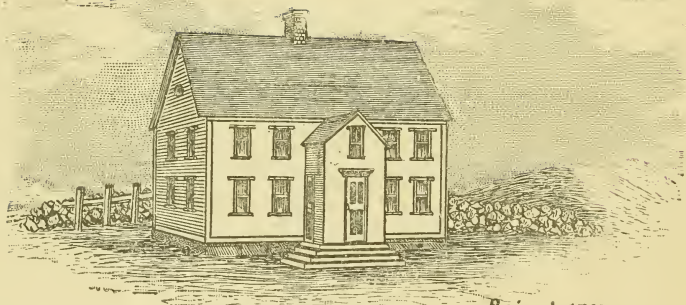
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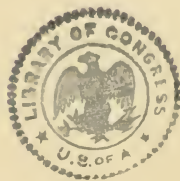


OLD MEETING HOUSE

*Raised 1795
Taken down 1845*

SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF
DR. DAVID RAY.

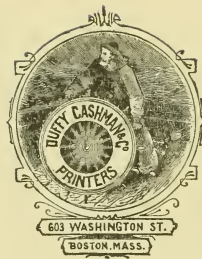
Holden, G B.
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BOSTON:
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1881.

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In Exch.
Wis. Hist. Soc.



TO

JOHN C. FERNALD,

HOPING IT MAY INTEREST HIM, AND BE CONSIDERED WORTHY
OF PRESERVATION,

This Fragment of Family History

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

G. B. H.

MILLSTON, WIS.,
May, 1881.



DAVID RAY,

The son of Samuel and Elizabeth, was born in Wrentham, Mass., Sept. 7, 1742. His mother's name, before her marriage, was Tuell. His grandfather's name was also Samuel, and his grandmother's maiden name was Miriam Smith. Both his father and his grandfather had large families, and both resided in Wrentham. The children of this second Samuel, and his wife Elizabeth, were *David, Elizabeth, Ferusha, Samuel, Miriam, Milatiah, Femima, Hepsibah and Rachel* (9).

David married Eunice Whiting, daughter of Eliphalet Whiting, Esq., a man of considerable wealth, who resided in Wrentham. Mr. Whiting's wife's maiden name was Abigail Mann. After Mr. Ray's marriage, Nov. 15, 1770, they resided in a part of Wrentham known as "Honey Pot,"—so called on account of the many bees kept there, and the large quantity of honey made. The *children of David and Eunice Ray* were four daughters, as follows:—

EUNICE	born Oct. 15, 1771, married	Dan Morse.
POLLY	" Oct. 11, 1773, "	John Holden.
BETSEY WHITING	" Oct. 3, 1781, "	Timothy Fernald.
ABIGAIL MANN	" Nov. 10, 1790, "	Henry Holden.

HIS MILITARY RECORD.

IN the excited period immediately preceding the Revolution, Mr. Ray was Lieutenant of a company of State Militia. He was commissioned for the Eastern District of Wrentham, under date of Aug. 11, 1771. At the breaking out of the war he belonged to a company of "Minute-men," in which he was Sergeant. On the memorable 19th of April, 1775, the day of the first blood shed at Lexington, his company was ordered into action, and marched from Wrentham, mustered for ten days' service.

His next service was a six months' campaign under Gen. Gates, at Ticonderoga, in 1776. In this campaign he was also Company Sergeant. The company was commanded by Capt. Lewis Whiting, and belonged to Col. Wheelock's regiment. Capt. Whiting was, no doubt, Mrs. Ray's brother, as she had a brother Lewis and a brother John.

After the above-named campaign, Mr. Ray received a Lieutenant's commission, and was in service, in what is known in history as the "Secret Expedition to Rhode Island," in 1777. During this service he was in Capt. Ezekiel Plympton's company, in Col. Benjamin Hawes's regiment, and was member of a court-martial convened at Little Compton, R. I., Oct. 12, 1777, as appears by an official paper, signed by Col. Hawes, left among Mr. Ray's effects. Mr. Enoch Spurr was a member of the same company.

The next year after he was in Capt. Munroe's company, Col. Sproat's regiment, for the term of three months' service; and afterwards four months in Capt. Moses Bul-

lard's company, in Col. Jacob's regiment; both the last-named terms of service in the State of Rhode Island. He was also in the service *somewhere* in the spring of 1779, as appears by a paper found in the State Treasurer's Office of Massachusetts, which I now have, and is as follows:—

“BOSTON, March 5, 1779.

“To the Hon. HENRY GARDNER, Esq., State Treasurer:

“SIR,— Please pay to Abner Cram the wages due me as specified in my Rolls, bearing date March 5, 1779, and his receipt shall be your discharge.

“From your humble servant,

“DAVID RAY, *Lieutenant.*”

By the foregoing, it appears he was in the service the larger part of the first five years of the war. He was now 38 years of age, had a family, a wife and two daughters, from whom he had been absent most of the time for five years, and whom it was his duty to support. The Continental money which he received for his services had depreciated till forty dollars in bills would bring but one dollar in specie. “A pair of boots,” says our school history, “cost six hundred dollars.” And a “soldier's pay for a month would hardly buy him a dinner.” (Barnes's School History.) No doubt he got tired of war's alarms, with its toils and hardships and no pay. A company of men in Boston and its vicinity owned a township of land in Maine, and held out inducements for families to go there and settle. Mr. Ray made a journey of exploration in the fall of 1779, and concluded to move his family into the new district. Mrs. Ray received a pension from the Government, on account of his military services, at the rate of one hundred and three dollars per annum, from March 4, 1831, until the time of her death, July 4, 1843. In granting

the pension, the commissioner only allowed about one year's service in all. But the service, as above narrated, is well established by record evidence and oral testimony.

THE FIRST SETTLERS.

JUST before the Revolutionary War, an act was passed in the General Court of Massachusetts granting a township of land to the "heirs of Capt. John Gorham, for services rendered against Canada in 1690, provided they settle thirty families and a learned Protestant minister in the new town within five years." The proprietors all resided in Massachusetts—in Boston, Groton, Woburn, Watertown, Wrentham, etc.—and they held frequent proprietors' meetings to advance the settlement of their new town. But it was more than three years after the confirmation of the grant by the Legislature when the first settlement was made.

GEORGE PEIRCE, Esquire, grandfather of Hon. George Peirce, now living in Harrison, was the pioneer. Mr. Peirce came in 1775 from Groton, and built a saw-mill on Crooked River, at Peirce's Falls, now Edes's Falls. *Benjamin Patch*, the father of Levi and Tarbell, came the next year, also from Groton, then unmarried, but in a few years married Mr. Peirce's daughter, and settled on the lot where Capt. Levi Patch since lived, now owned by Cyrus Morse. *Daniel Cobb*, the father of Elder William Gorham Cobb, came from Gorham, Me., in 1778, and settled on the east side of Crooked River, about a mile above Mr. Peirce's place. His son, Elder Wm. G. Cobb, was the first male child born in Otisfield,—born Oct. 14, 1779.

JOSEPH SPURR, the grandfather of Mrs. Joseph Knight and Miss Sally Spurr, both now living, came in 1779, in September, and settled on lot No. 77, just south of Spurr's Corner. He moved from Wrentham, in 1776, to Mansfield, Me., thence to Windham, and thence to Otisfield. His children were *Joseph, Jr., Enoch, William, Samuel, Robert, Polly, Femima, Sally, Lydia.*

Major JONATHAN MOORS came, in 1779, from Wrentham, and located on the place since owned by George P. Holden. He afterwards built the house where Merrill Knight since lived and kept public-house. *Samuel Reed*, the grandfather of William, came the same year and settled on the place where William Reed now lives. Mr. Reed came from Groton to Machias, then he moved to Windham, and thence to Otisfield. He was killed by lightning a few years after in the town of Windham.

Mr. RAY came in 1780, in the spring, and had reached the town of Windham, and was stopping for a few days' rest at Noah Reed's, when occurred the memorable *Dark Day* (May 19), when candles were brought on to the table at dinner-time. He first located about half a mile from Esquire Peirce, on the west side of Crooked River, now in the town of Naples. Here he made a clearing, built a house, and planted apple-trees. There was an open meadow on his lot, sixty rods from the house where he cut hay; and his two eldest daughters, Eunice and Polly, then ten and eight years old, hauled hay from the meadow on a hand-sled.

I visited the place in 1880, just a hundred years after Mr. Ray settled there, and saw the ruins of the old house and cellar, and some apple-trees. The land has a gentle southern

slope, but its principal attraction is a running brook, whose merry laughter, as musical to-day as it was a century ago, can be plainly heard where the house stood. The brook is twenty rods west of the house, and courses its artless way down the sloping declivity over moss-grown rocks, southward to the meadow. What joyous music is there in the falling waters of a running brook! and who would not wish that his home might ever be by the side of a stream of clear running water? Here, in the old house, now long gone to decay, Mr. Ray's third daughter Betsey was born, Oct. 3, 1781, the first female child born in Otisfield who lived to womanhood.*

Before coming to Otisfield, Mr. Ray, no doubt, had conversation with the proprietors of the town about building a grist-mill, and had agreed to build if he could find a suitable site. This is presumed from the proprietors' records. There was no grist-mill in Otisfield and the nearest one was at Capt. Dingley's, in "Raymond Town." A mill for grinding corn and rye would be a great public benefit and encourage settlement in the new town. The proprietors often had the subject under consideration, and about a month before Mr. Ray came, chose a committee to agree with some suitable person about building.

He soon found a mill site at the outlet of Saturday Pond, and built a grist-mill, which was in operation as early as

* "Common report" says Jonathan Moors's daughter Sally, afterwards Mrs. Henry Turner, was the first. But she was born May 1, 1782, seven months after Mr. Ray's daughter.

A family by the name of Sawtelle had buried an infant daughter earlier and moved away.

1781. At first, he set apart two days in each week when he would grind. At such times he came up, staid the two days, and ground for such as came and then returned to his family. This was his practice for about two years, and then he moved his family up and lived in a log house, where Moses Spiller now lives. The date of his removal was May 6, 1783, according to Mr. Samuel Knight's Diary. They moved with oxen and cart as far as Mr. Patch's place, where they exchanged the cart for an ox-sled. No road had been cut farther,—all beyond was an unbroken forest. People came from Norway for a good many years to Mr. Ray's mill, so says the "History of Norway." And beyond doubt they came from South Paris and Hebron, now Oxford.

A few years after, Mr. Ray built a saw-mill by agreement with the proprietors of the town. The contract to build the saw-mill was entered into at Groton, Sept. 6, 1786, the mill to be done within one year from that date. For building these two mills he received a deed of the "Mill Lot," so called, and two fractional lots lying on Saturday Pond. About this time a movement was made to organize some sort of local town government, and a petition was drawn up and signed as follows:—

"To George Peirce, Esq., one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Cumberland, Commonwealth of Massachusetts: We, the subscribers, being five of the inhabitants of the Plantation of Otisfield, do hereby apply to you Honor for a warrant to call a meeting of the inhabitants of said plantation at the dwelling-house of Dea. Stephen Phinney, in Otisfield, on Tuesday, ye 15th day of May next, at ten o'clock, A.M., to act on the following questions, to wit:

- "1st. To choose a Moderator.
- "2d. To choose a Plantation Clerk.
- "3d. To choose Selectmen.

"4th. To choose Assessors, and to do such other business as the inhabitants may think necessary.

(Signed) DAVID RAY,
 BENJAMIN PATCH,
 JOSEPH HANCOCK,
 JONATHAN MOORS,
 SAMUEL GAMMON."

"Dated April 23, 1787.

This was the first public meeting for town purposes held in Otisfield. And there was not then to exceed thirty families in town, if so many. At that first plantation meeting Mr. Ray was chosen Moderator, and Joseph Wight, Jr., Plantation Clerk; David Ray, Benjamin Patch, and Noah Reed, Assessors, and Jonathan Moors Collector. Though they elected assessors and collector, they didn't assess any *money* tax for several years. They made an assessment of highway taxes, which were worked out on the roads. But working on the road at that time, and for nearly twenty years after, meant cutting down trees, cutting away stumps, and getting the larger stones out of the way for ox-carts. No ploughing was done on the road earlier than 1804.

TOWN OFFICES.

FROM the time of the first plantation meeting, Mr. Ray was elected to some town office for many years. He was one of the assessors as follows: In 1787, '88, '89, '90, '91, '92, '93, '95, '96, '97, '98, and 1804. In 1794 the plantation elected a treasurer for the first time, and made choice of Mr. Ray. He was Moderator at town and plantation meetings in 1787, '88, '89, '90, '91, '92, '93, '95, '98, '99, 1806 and 1809, and perhaps more.

In 1794, the plantation having no representative, Mr. Ray was elected to present a petition to the General Court for the abatement of taxes. In 1810 he was elected to represent his district in the General Court of Massachusetts. In 1812, Sept. 2, a town meeting was called "to take in consideration the distressed situation of our country," and to elect a delegate to the convention at Gray, called at the request of the selectmen of the town of North Yarmouth, when Mr. Ray was elected delegate. The following were elected a committee to draft resolutions:—

Dr. Silas Blake; Esquire Grinfill Blake; Dr. David Ray; Capt. Daniel Holden; Mr. Benjamin Wight.

The meeting adjourned to meet again on the 7th of September, at which time the inhabitants met and adopted the resolutions reported by the committee, and voted to send a copy to the *Portland Gazette* for publication.*

This may have been about the last of Mr. Ray's public service. He was now seventy years of age, and for twenty-five years had been much in public office. He was frequently a committee of one on building or repairing bridges, for the sale of ministerial and school lands, etc. Let us now go back, and resume the narrative of his

* I have never been able to find any copy of the *Portland Gazette* containing the above-named resolutions, and it has been a good deal of a query in my mind what the "distressing condition" was which our honored forefathers thought they could affect, or which they were called to act upon in the town of Otisfield.



The cut shows Mr. Ray's log house in the centre, with the school-room attached, and the two-story frame house on the right, in which Mr. Roby was installed as pastor of the first church in Otisfield, since occupied by Mr. Henry Holden.

PRIVATE LIFE.

IN 1795 he built a frame addition to his log house, for a school-room, and employed Major William Swann, at his own expense, to teach. This was the first school ever taught in Otisfield, and it was several years before the first town school was started on the hill. The school was intended for the benefit of Mr. Ray's daughters, and though the eldest was married, she was a regular attendant. A few others besides his daughters were also members of the school. Writing-paper was scarce and expensive, and his daughters made books of birch bark, on which they had copies, and learned to write.

The first valuation of the town was taken in April, 1795, and is an interesting document. The ten highest on the list were as follows :—

DAVID RAY	£132
GEORGE PEIRCE	126
BENJAMIN PATCH	119
MARK KNIGHT	112
JONATHAN MOORS	86
DAVID KNEELAND	86
JOSEPH CATES	85 10s.
JOSEPH WIGHT	71
JOSEPH SPURR	69
DAVID MAYBERRY	55

The pound was equal to \$3.33.1-3, and reducing pounds to dollars, we find Mr. Ray's valuation was \$440. But it must be borne in mind that values have changed very much since that time. In this valuation Mr. Ray had a house, barn,

saw-mill, grist-mill, fifteen acres improved land, and two hundred and forty acres unimproved land, all valued together at \$263. And of personal property: one yoke of oxen, two cows, four neat cattle, four swine, twenty pounds in money, half a ton of hay, and ten bushels of potatoes, all valued at \$177. On a list of over seventy persons, tax-payers, the highest valuation in town was \$440. I am unable to say just what such property would be worth to-day; probably \$3,000, or more. At that time men did not accumulate wealth so fast as now. Then there were no millionnaires in the country, and a man possessed of a few thousand dollars was considered *rich*. When a young man, Mr. Ray worked out for \$40 a year; and being found a faithful and industrious servant, his employer gave him a pair of thick shoes extra, worth seventy-five cents.

Mr. Ray was public-spirited in the sphere in which he moved. He gave an acre of ground for a meeting-house site and for town purposes—the first meeting-house in town—and a lot adjoining it for a public cemetery. He built the frame of the meeting-house under contract with the proprietors of the town, entered into at Groton, Jan. 3, 1795, for which he received £51; and he took so much interest in its construction that when it was done he owned *six* pews in it, as appears by his account-book, and *five* at the time of his death, as appears by the inventory of his estate. Not that he wanted so many pews, but being committee-man on finishing the house, he furnished materials and paid the carpenters, and accepted the pews in settlement of his claims. The frame of the meeting-house was raised in 1795.

The same year Mr. Ray built a new two-story frame house

for his family, which was a fortress for strength. The timber was mostly eight inches square, and it was *boarded* with oak plank two inches thick, firmly pinned on to plates and sills with oaken pins. The heaviest winds never shook it. But the greatest marvel in it was the brick chimney, which was about fifteen feet square in the lower story, and had three large open fireplaces and two brick ovens. The largest fireplace, that in the kitchen, would take in wood six feet long; and each of the ovens were large enough for a village bakery. In this house the First Congregational Church was organized, and Rev. Thomas Roby installed its pastor. This was Nov. 23, 1797. At that time there was no frame house on the hill, and but few in town.

On the town records Mr. Ray is generally called Lieutenant; in a few instances, only, is he called Doctor. He was the first physician settled in Otisfield; and it was many years before the settlement of the first physician in Bridgeton. Just how he obtained his medical education, or how much medical education he had, is unknown. Mr. Benjamin Wight used to say he studied with Dr. Mann, of Wrentham; but Mr. Ray's daughter Abigail didn't know with whom he studied. She said he *lived* with Dr. Mann awhile before he was married, and was under treatment for some difficulty in his stomach. It may be said, in this connection, that Mr. Wight was born and brought up in the same town, viz., Wrentham, and was acquainted with Mr. Ray from boyhood. Perhaps Dr. Mann put it into his mind to be a doctor, and assisted him in his studies. Mr. Ray had the common medical text-books of his day, which he brought from Massachusetts, and with which he was familiar.

Mr. Ray was of a quiet disposition, slow and deliberate in his movements, and never excited to anger. He possessed much kindness of heart, and was good to the poor and the unfortunate. If people came to mill, as they sometimes did after he had retired, he got up and ground their grists without a murmur. When poor people came to mill he often ground without pay.

He had a habit of saying to his youngest daughter, Abigail, whom he always called Nabby, "Nabby, you must be good to strangers, for thereby you may entertain angels unawares." If he saw his neighbor fallen by the wayside, as was sometimes the case in those days, he lifted him up, set him upon his own saddle, and assisted him home. If a man was *down* he did not pass by on the other side, but gave him a helping hand. Old people say that boys would sometimes enter his orchard and club the apple-trees, when the old gentleman would quietly look up at them and pass on. He *died* Dec. 1, 1822, aged 80 years and 84 days. The inscription on his headstone reads: "*Industry, Frugality, and Economy* were his leading traits of character," which is a truthful witness as far as it goes. But it ought to include benevolence, as his character has been handed down to us, and read,—"*Benevolence, Industry, Frugality and Economy* were leading traits in his character."

Mrs. EUNICE RAY was a woman of genial and sunny disposition, who looked at the bright side of life, and made those around her cheerful and happy. Of settled religious convictions, she lived daily in accordance with her belief, and brought up her family in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She was an excellent horsewoman, and rode much on

horseback, as did all her daughters. She made frequent journeys to Portland, and once, or more, she went as far as Wrentham in the saddle. There was no wagon-road in town for more than twenty-five years of their residence here, and during that time all travelling was done in the saddle. She made all the cloth for the family, for both male and female wear. She was a skilful weaver, and wrought many kinds of curious goods for herself and her daughter's wear, and for Mr. Ray, and for bedding and table use; and her well-trained fingers could spin the *finest quality* of linen thread.

It was her custom, several times a day, to retire by herself to an upper chamber, and offer up her prayers in secret to her Heavenly Father. Towards the close of her life, in her old age, her prayers consisted mostly of passages of Scripture which she had committed to memory. One favorite passage which she often repeated on her bended knees was: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you," etc., to the end. As our Heavenly Father regards the condition of the heart rather than any set form of words, I believe her prayers were acceptable, and she had her reward. She lived to a ripe old age, and passed quietly away without sickness or pain. It was the ebbing out of life, like the drying up of a running brook, whose waters, absorbed by the sun, diminish day by day until the brook ceases to flow. She retained all her faculties until near the close, except the memory of her own age. When asked by visitors how old she was, she would answer, "E'en a'most ninety-seven." This was when she was really ninety-four, and some of the family would correct her, saying, "Grandmother, you are only ninety-four." And

she would answer, "Well, I suppose I was mistaken; you may have it your own way." An hour after, when asked the same question again, she would answer, as before, "E'en a'most ninety-seven." In her own mind she grew no older. When she was ninety-five she would walk to the neighbors a third of a mile off, and back again. She died July 4, 1843, and was then, indeed, as she had often said, "E'en a'most ninety-seven," lacking only thirty-eight days of that remarkable age. She was buried by the side of her husband, on Meeting-House Hill, in the lot donated by Mr. Ray for a public cemetery.

RAY MEETING.

A MEETING of the descendants of Dr. David and Eunice Ray was held at the old homestead in Otisfield, Sept. 7, 1867, being the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Ray's birth. The meeting was called to order by Eli Fernald, Esq. Hon. Alpheus S. Holden was elected President, and Grinfill B. Holden Secretary. Mr. Otis Fernald read an appropriate hymn, which was sung, after which Elder James Libbey made a prayer invoking the Lord to bless the assembly. Mr. Otis Fernald then introduced the descendants present as follows:—

Joseph Scribner * and
 Clarissa Scribner,* his wife.
 Eunice Scribner, their daughter.
 Col. Levi Holden * and
 Anna Holden (Miss Leach),* his wife.
 Mrs. Charlotte Bird.

Mrs. Eunice Moors.*
 Hon. Alpheus S. Holden.
 James C. Moors and
 Ella L. Moors *(Miss Nichols), his wife.
 Clara Moors, }
 Frank Moors, }
 Children of Benjamin and Eunice.

* Died since.

David R. Morse.*
 Albion K. P. Morse, son of David.
 James Chase * and
 Miriam Chase, his wife.
 Otis Fernald and
 Sally Fernald, his wife.
 Daniel Chase * and
 Betsey Chase, his wife.
 Sarah E. Chase, their daughter.
 Eli Fernald and
 Sarah E. (Goodwin), his wife.
 Charlotte E. Fernald, }
 Emily P. Fernald, }
 Daughters of Eli.
 Emily Fernald.
 John C. Fernald and
 Sarah A. (Hunting), his wife.
 Granville Fernald and
 Elizabeth (Walker),* his wife.
 Amie E. Fernald, }
 Ellen May Fernald, }
 Daughters of Granville.
 Nathaniel S. Fernald and
 Susie J. (Wiggins), his wife.
 Frederick Lincoln Fernald.
 Herbert Fernald.
 Lewis Wight and
 Sarah C. Wight, his wife.
 Georgie Wight, daughter of Lewis.
 Nettie Fernald, daughter of Eli.
 Henry Holden * and
 Abigail M. Holden,* his wife.
 David R. Holden.
 Mrs. Rose C. Holden, widow of Al-
 mon.

Esther Cushman, daughter of David
 R. Holden.
 Ansel Cushman, her husband.
 Etta F. Cushman, }
 Emma F. Cushman, }
 Harrison L. Cushman, }
 Children of Esther and Ansel.
 David L. Holden, son of David R.
 Josephine (Jackson), his wife.*
 Ada Holden, their daughter.*
 Hattie Belle Holden, youngest daugh-
 ter of David R.
 Benjamin T. Holden and
 Mehitable (Scribner),* his wife.
 Anson J. Holden, son of Benjamin.
 Delphina (Linnei), his wife.
 Gertrude Holden, their daughter.
 Henrietta Holden, }
 Georgie Holden, }
 Daughters of Benjamin.
 Joseph W. Holden.
 Henry Holden, Jr., and
 Elizabeth A. (Wight), his wife.
 Edward F. Holden, son of Henry.
 Grinfill B. Holden.
 Abigail R. Smith.*
 Clara E. Smith, }
 Charles H. Smith, }
 Willie F. Smith, }
 Children of Abigail and W.C. Smith.
 Moses Spiller and
 Elizabeth (Holden), his wife.
 Frank Spiller, }
 Nellie Spiller, }
 Children of Moses and Lizzie.

* Died since.

The process of introductions being ended, long tables were spread in the different rooms of the old mansion, namely: The "Great Room," or parlor. The "Little Room," being Dr. and Mrs. Ray's private room, and the old "Long Kitchen." The tables were bounteously supplied with food prepared by the ladies; dinner was announced by the President, the company was seated at the different tables, the Divine blessing was invoked by Elder James Libbey, and the people partook of a sumptuous repast. After dinner the company enjoyed themselves in social conversation, in making new acquaintances or renewing old ones at their pleasure, and separated late in the afternoon with the feeling that it was a day to be remembered.

In the fourteen years which have passed since that gathering, quite a number who were then present, whose age and social relations rendered them conspicuous objects of our regard, have passed over the river. Of these were *Henry Holden*, and his wife *Abigail Holden*. *Joseph Scribner*, and *Clarissa* his wife. Col. *Levi Holden*, and his wife *Anna*. *David R. Morse*, Mrs. *Eunice Moors*, *James Chase*, and *Daniel Chase*. Besides those above named, several of a younger generation have passed away.



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